

1999 One-VA Survey of Employees: Veterans Benefits Administration

Summary Report

Surveys and Research Staff



Data Management Office

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Summary of Preliminary Results

Introduction

This report presents a summary of the results from the 1999 One-VA Employee Survey¹. Unlike the previous 1997 survey which was administered via paper and pencil, this year's survey was administered via the VBA Intranet e-mail system from mid-May to mid-June 1999. Distributing the survey via e-mail proved to be a very inexpensive and time-saving method for obtaining measures of employee satisfaction. However, the response rate for the survey was much lower this year than in 1997. In 1997, 8,860 employees out of 11,893 responded to the survey yielding a response rate of 74.5 percent. This year only 4,888 employees out of 11,410 responded to the survey yielding a response rate of 43.0 percent. The reasons for the decreased response rate are unclear. However, the most probable explanations are that 1) employees were concerned about the confidentiality of their results using the intranet and 2) employees saw no clear organizational use of the 1997 results.

Demographics

The demographics of the respondents in 1999 are fairly similar to those in 1997. Comparisons between the two years are made in the charts which follow. The gender distribution was very similar for the two years (data not shown). The percent of respondents from GS levels 1-4 decreased from 11 percent in 1997 to 7 percent in 1999. There was also a 5 percent increase in the number of respondents from pay grades GS-9 and higher from 1997 to 1999. There was a decrease in the percentage in the age group 40 to 49 and an increase in the age group 50 to 59. This change is most likely just a reflection of the aging of the large percentage of employees who were hired at the end of the Vietnam Era. A higher percentage of Caucasians responded to the survey in 1999 (70 percent) than in 1997 (67 percent); alternatively, a lower percentage of African Americans responded in 1999 (16 percent) than in 1997 (20 percent). A lower percentage of non-disabled veteran employees responded to the survey in 1999 (21 percent) than in 1997 (30 percent), and a higher percentage of disabled veteran employees responded (27 percent in 1999 compared to 19 percent in 1997). The non-veteran employee population of respondents remained stable at 51 percent.

Overall Satisfaction

The percentage of respondents who were satisfied with the organization at the present time increased from 43 percent in 1997 to 48 percent in 1999. The percentage of those dissatisfied decreased slightly from 31 percent in 1997 to 29 percent in 1999, while the percentage of those neither satisfied nor dissatisfied decreased from 26 percent in 1997 to 23 percent in 1999.

¹ The One-VA title is used to distinguish this employee survey from others and to show a link to the survey conducted across VA in 1997. However, at this time, VBA is the only VA entity to re-survey its employees with this instrument.

Dimensions

There were several dimensions that saw an improvement of 5 or more percentage points for the favorable categories (“strongly agree” and “agree”).

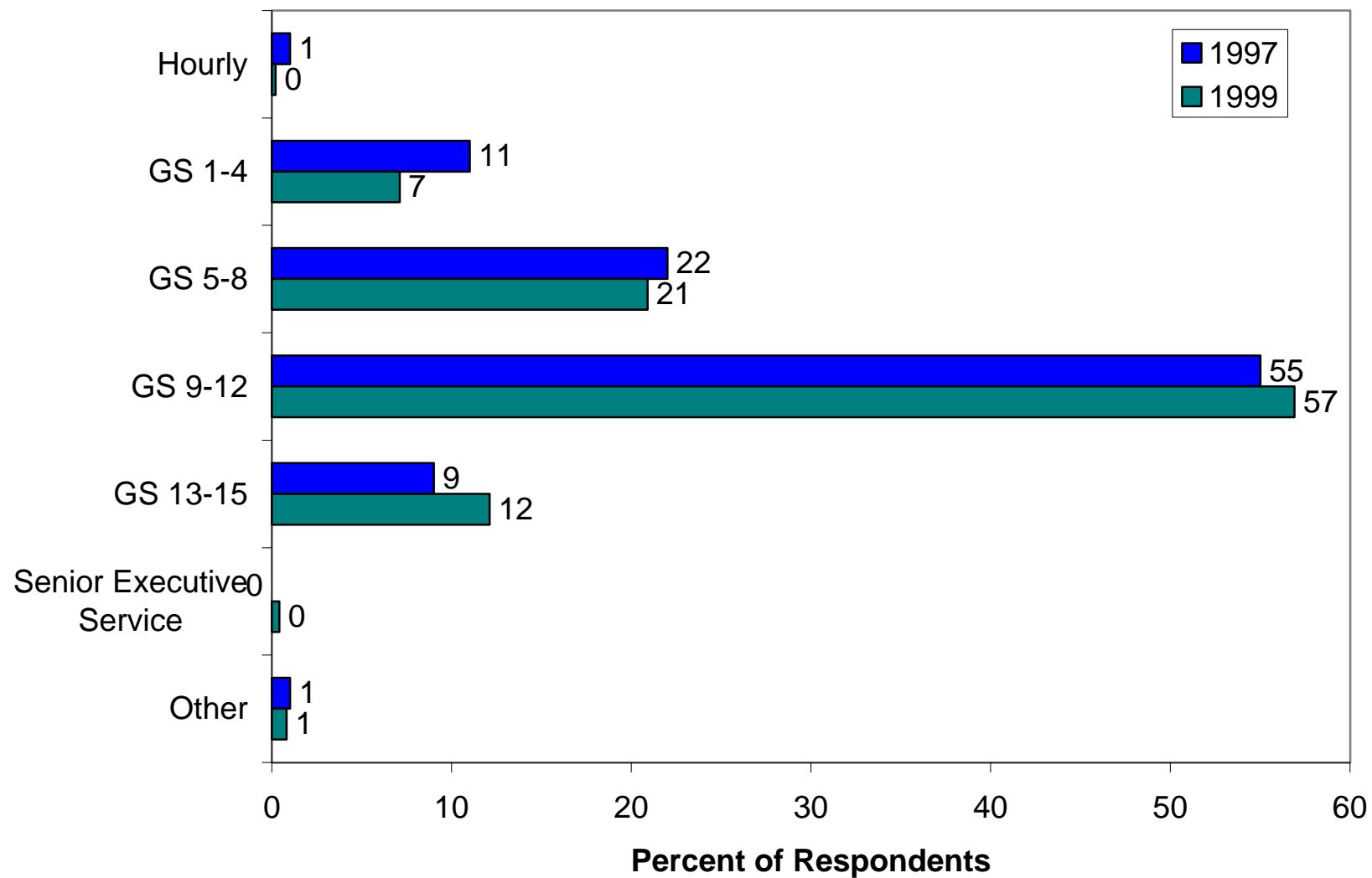
- The percentage of respondents who had favorable attitudes toward the *work environment/quality of worklife* increased from 38 percent in 1997 to 44 percent in 1999.
- The percentage of respondents who had favorable attitudes toward the organization’s policies on the balancing of *work and family/personal life* increased from 47 percent in 1997 to 55 percent in 1999.
- A higher percentage of respondents in 1999 (46 percent) felt favorable to the organization’s *performance measures* than in 1997 (39 percent).
- Lastly, more respondents had favorable attitudes towards *supervision* in 1999 (51 percent) than in 1997 (45 percent).

For the remainder of the dimensions, all remained the same or improved from 1997 to 1999 except for *use of resources*. The table below shows the 18 dimensions ordered from most favorable to least favorable for both 1997 and 1999. In both 1997 and 1999, the dimension of customer orientation had the highest percentage of favorable attitudes (57 and 58 percent, respectively) and the dimension of innovation had the lowest percentage of favorable attitudes (35 percent for both years). The charts on the following pages outline the 1997 and 1999 percent distributions along the five-point scale for each of the 18 dimensions; these are arrayed from those with the highest favorable percentages to those with the lowest for 1999.

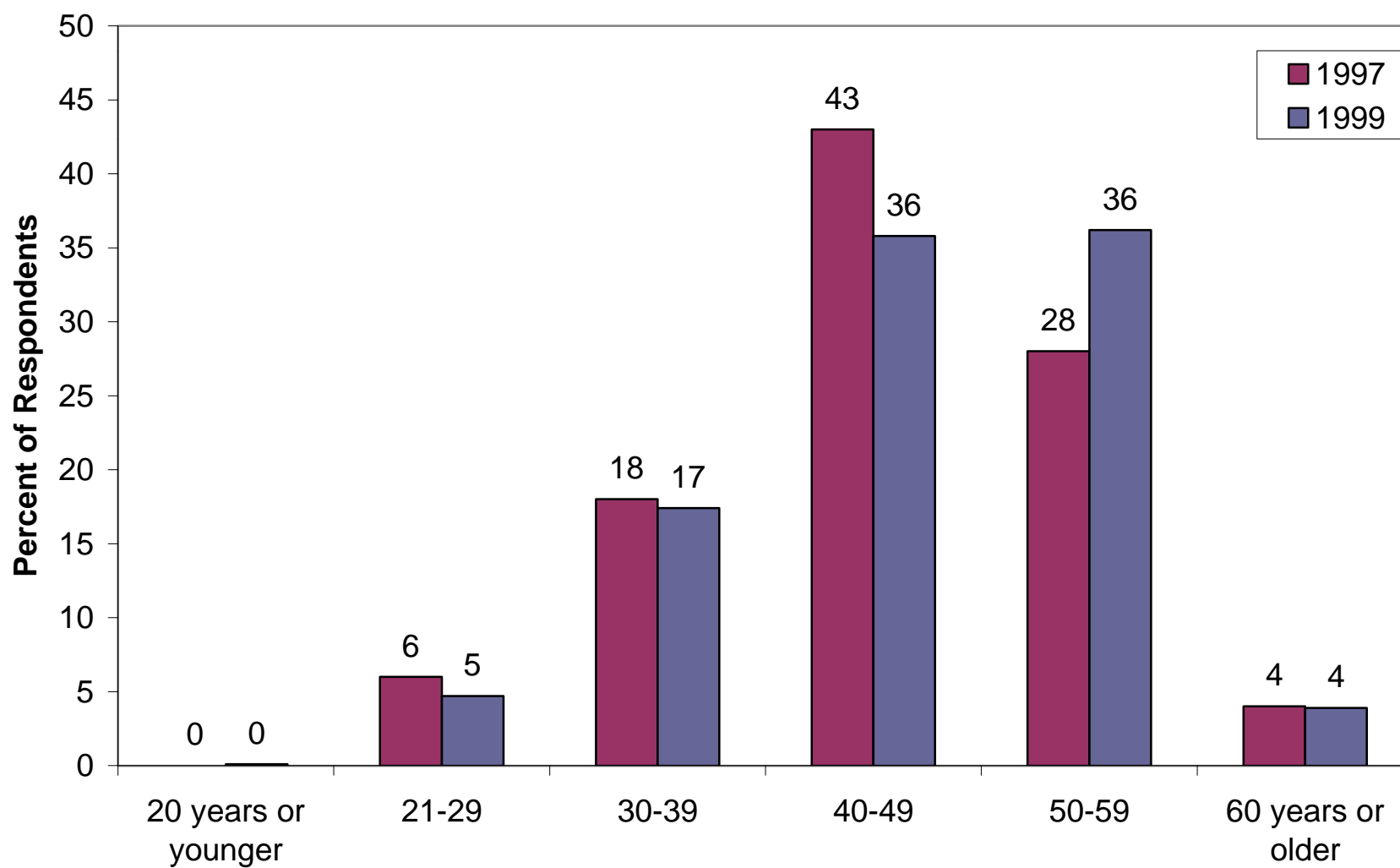
1997 and 1999 Ordering of Dimensions

1997 Order from Most Favorable to Least Favorable	%	1999 Order from Most Favorable to Least Favorable	%
Customer Orientation	57	Customer Orientation	58
Diversity	56	Diversity	57
Communication	48	Work and Family/Personal Life	55
Work and Family/Personal Life	47	Supervision	51
Supervision	45	No Barriers to Service Delivery	50
No Barriers to Service Delivery	45	Communication	49
Leadership and Quality	43	Leadership and Quality	46
Teamwork	42	Performance Measures	46
Rewards/Recognition	39	Teamwork	46
Use of Resources	39	Work Environment/Quality of Worklife	44
Job Security/Commitment to Workforce	39	Employee Involvement	41
Performance Measures	39	Strategic Planning	40
Employee Involvement	38	Fairness	39
Work Environment/Quality of Worklife	38	Job Security/Commitment to Workforce	39
Training/Career Development	36	Rewards/Recognition	39
Fairness	35	Training/Career Development	39
Strategic Planning	35	Use of Resources	38
Innovation	35	Innovation	35

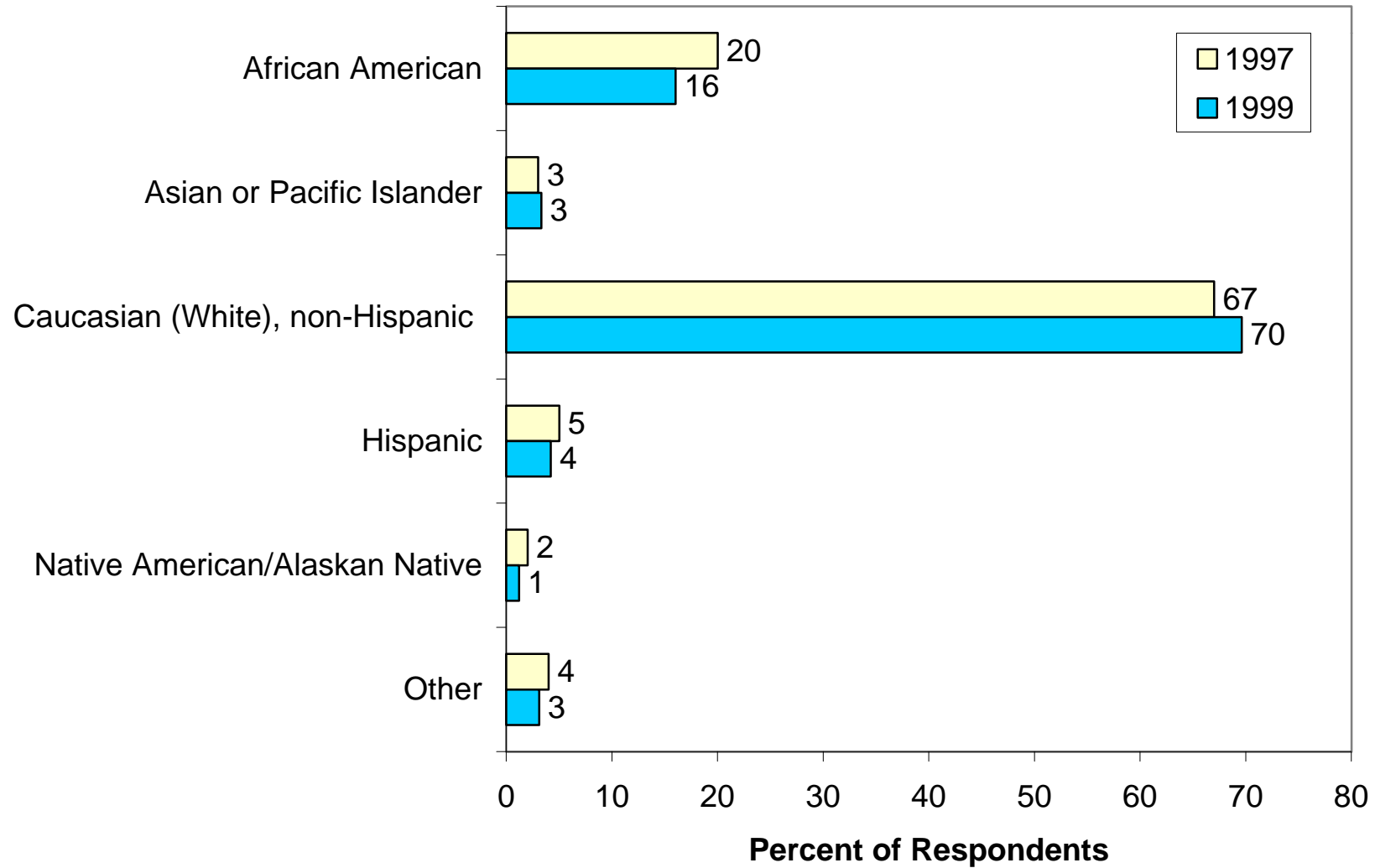
Pay Grade



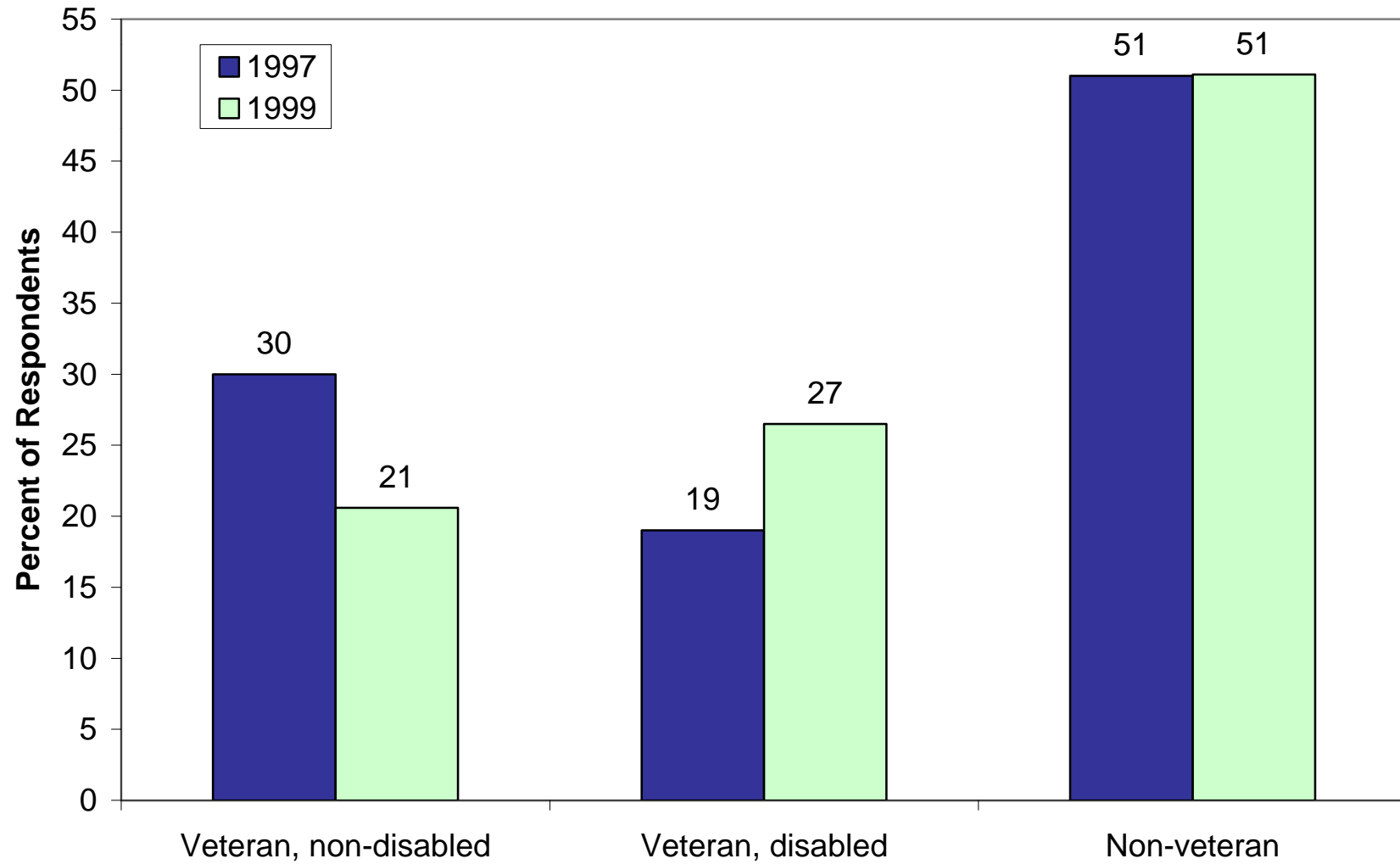
Age



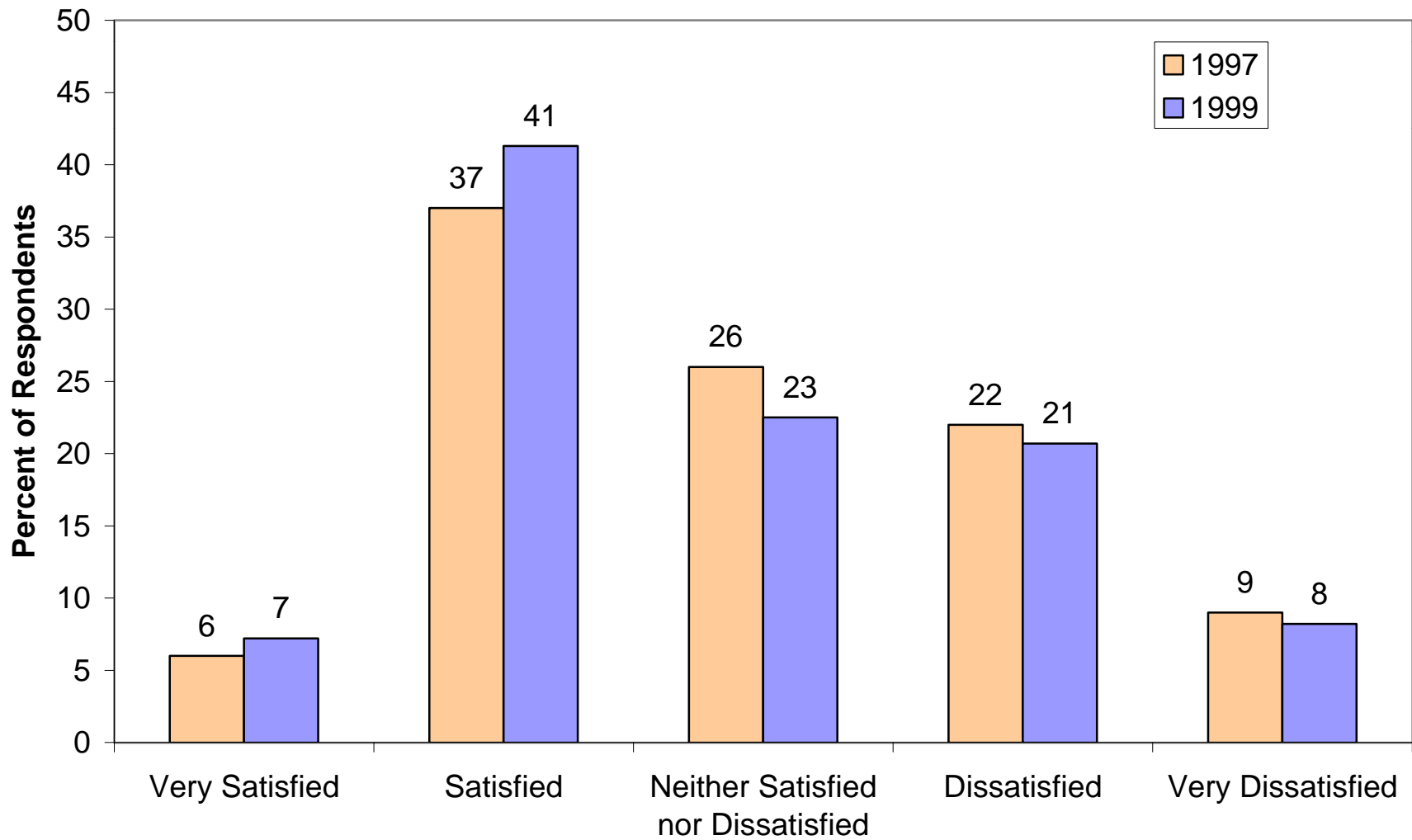
Race/Ethnicity



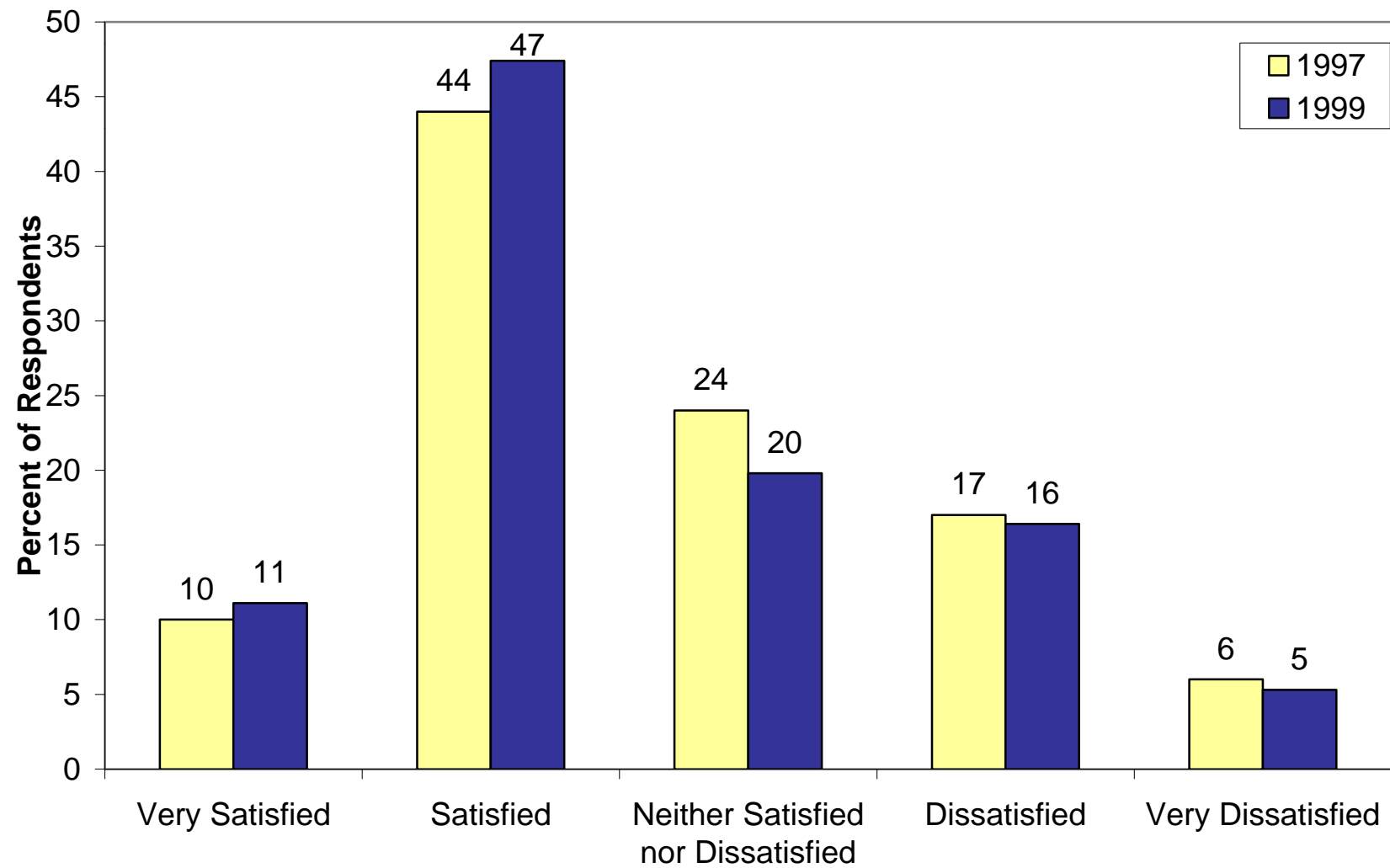
Veteran Status



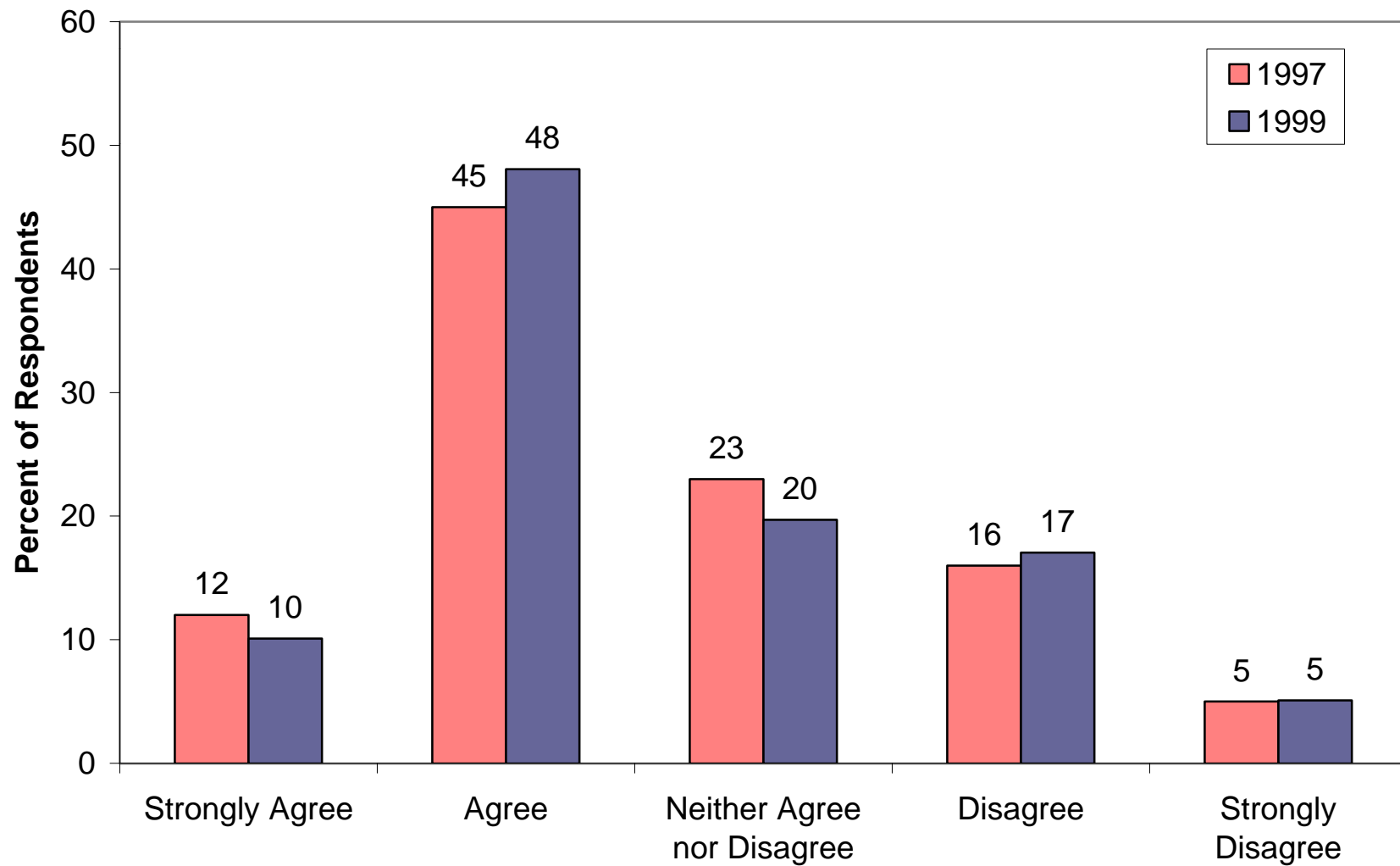
Overall Satisfaction with the Organization



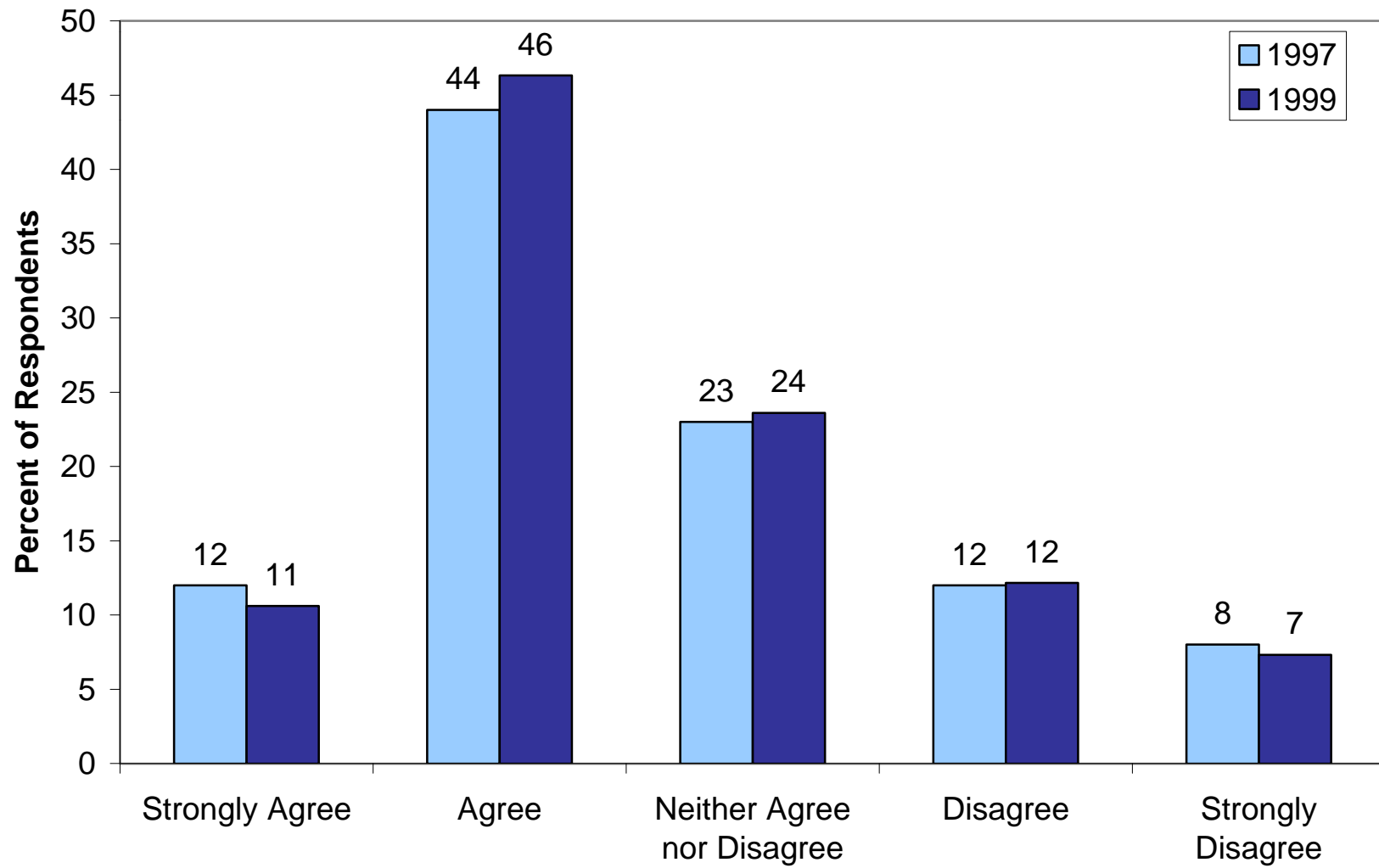
Job Satisfaction



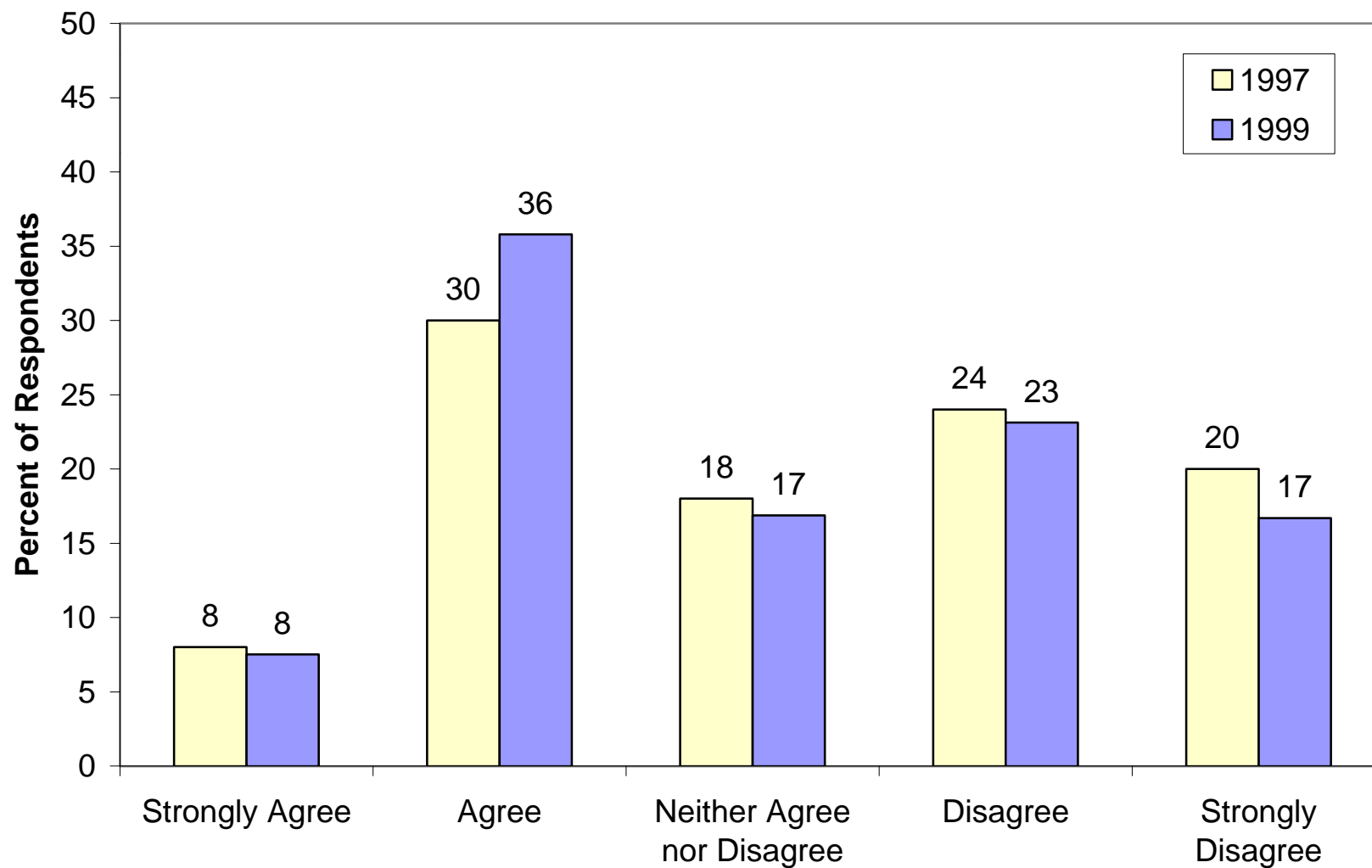
Customer Orientation



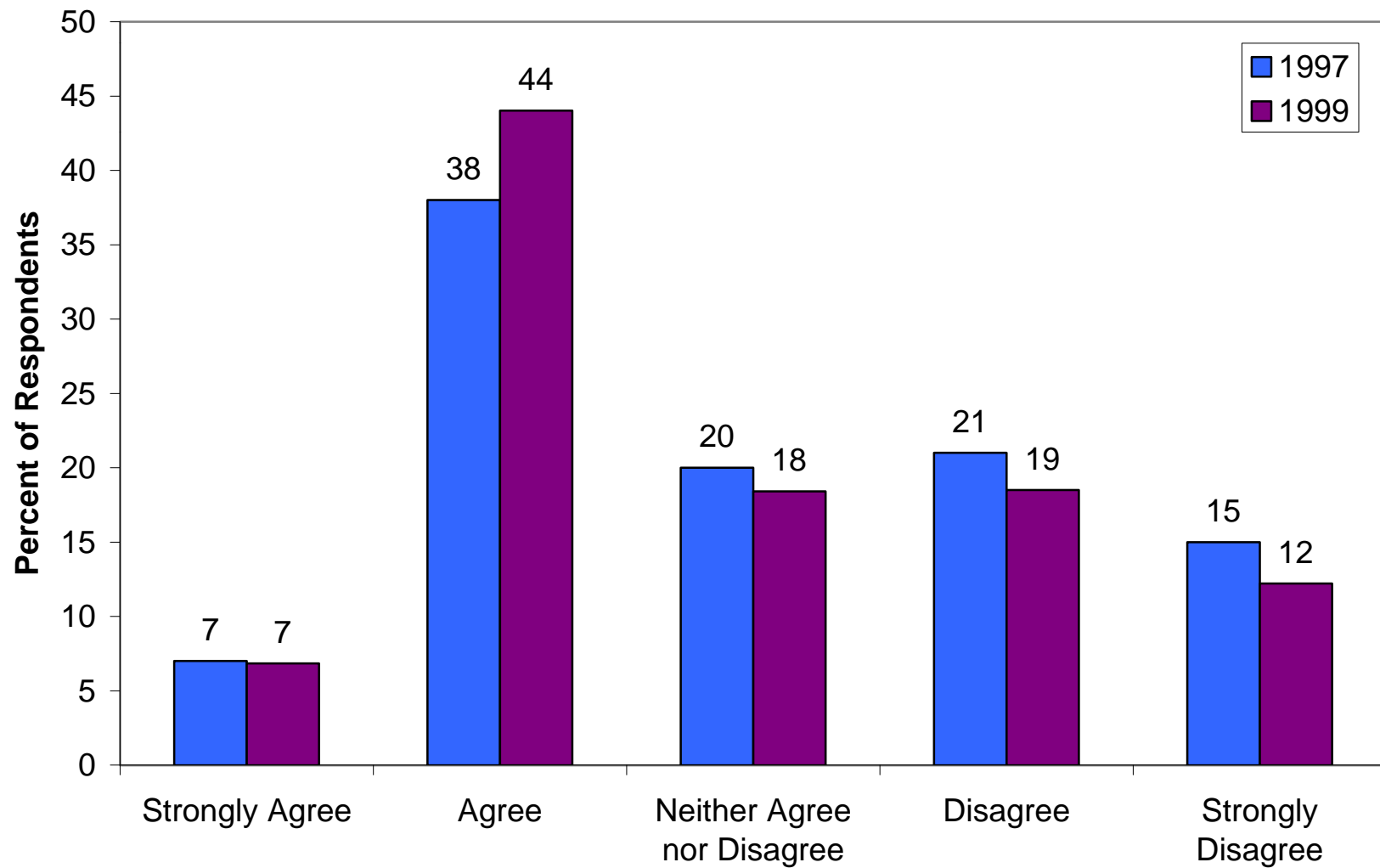
Diversity



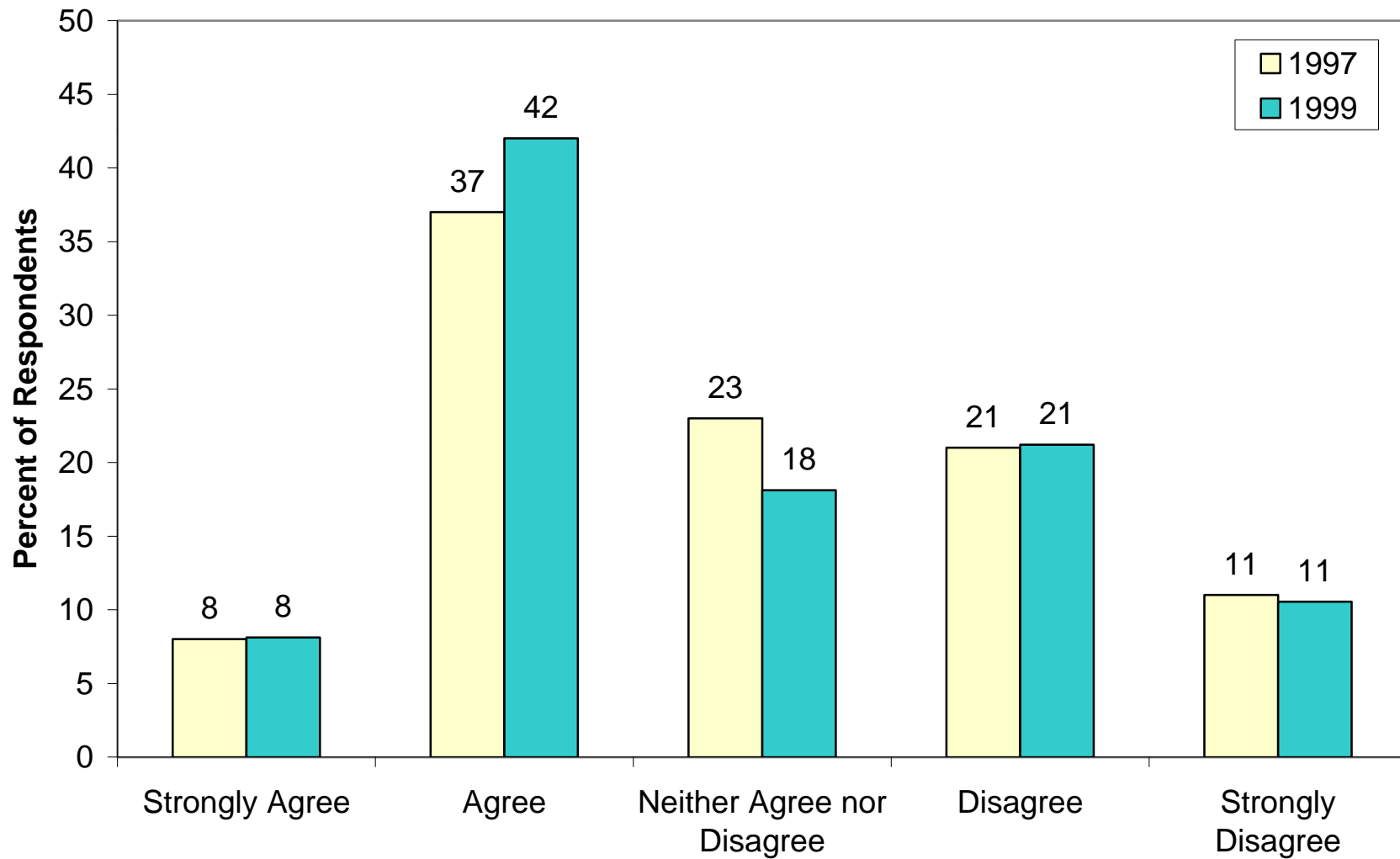
Work Environment/Quality of Worklife



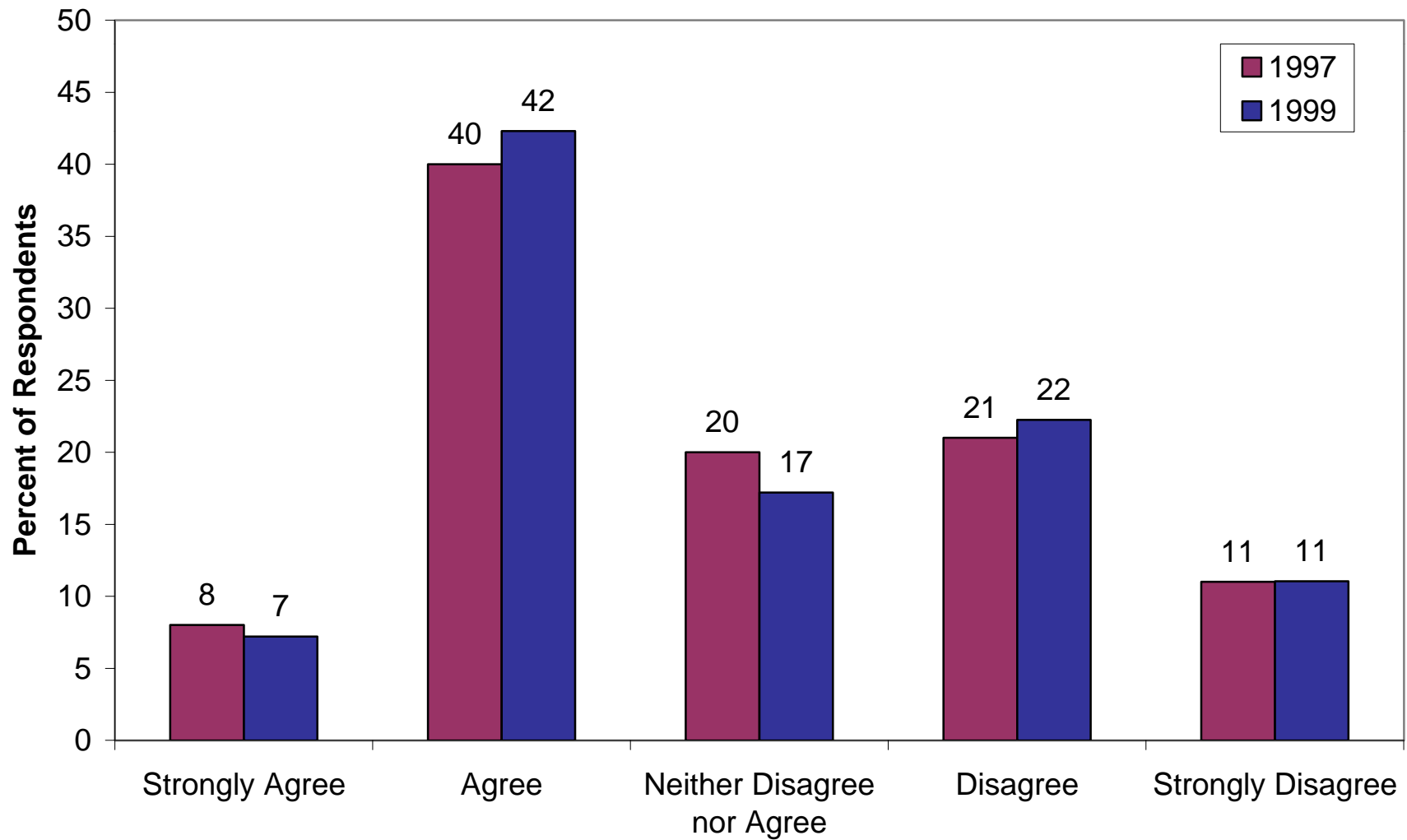
Supervision



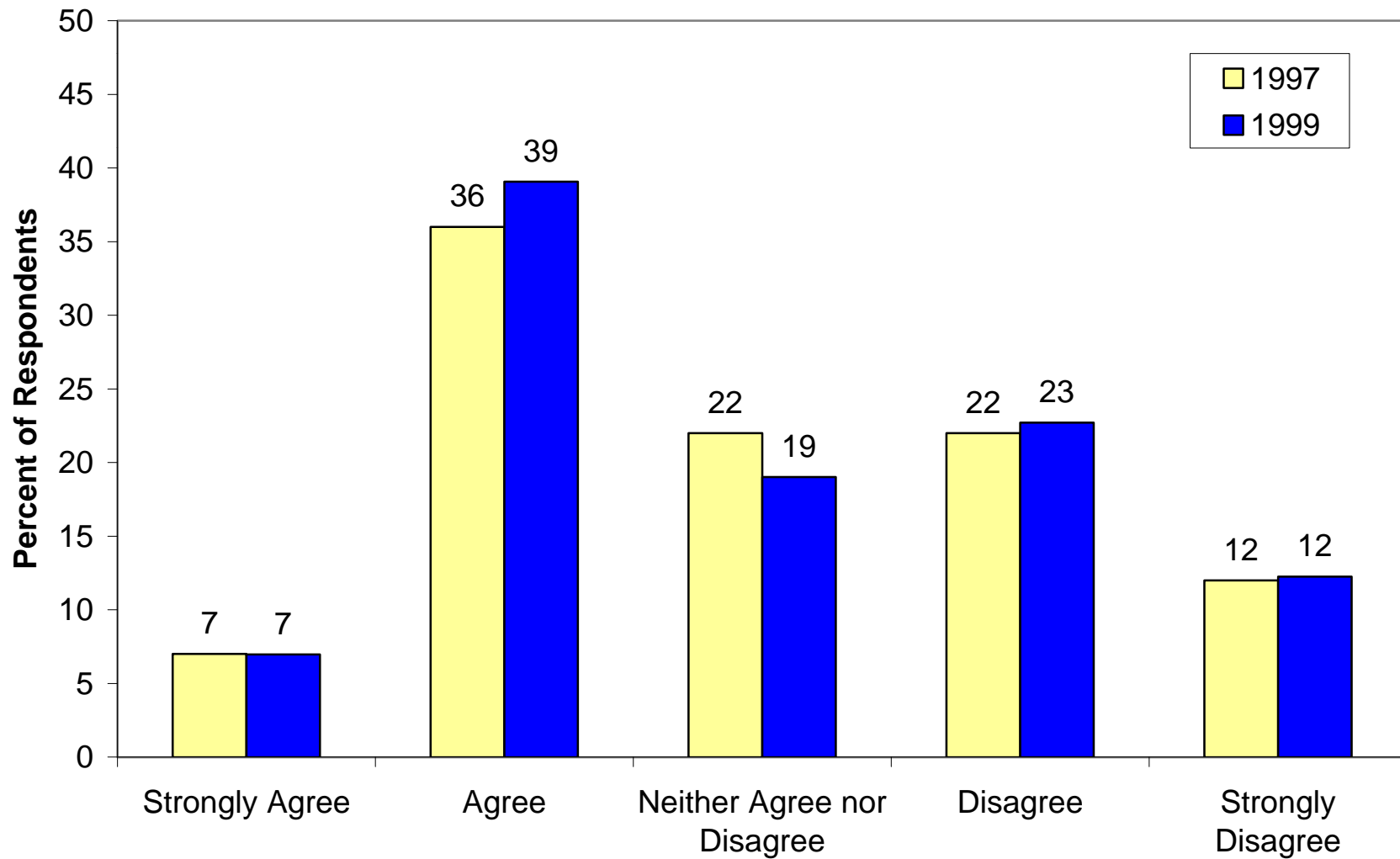
No Barriers to Service Delivery



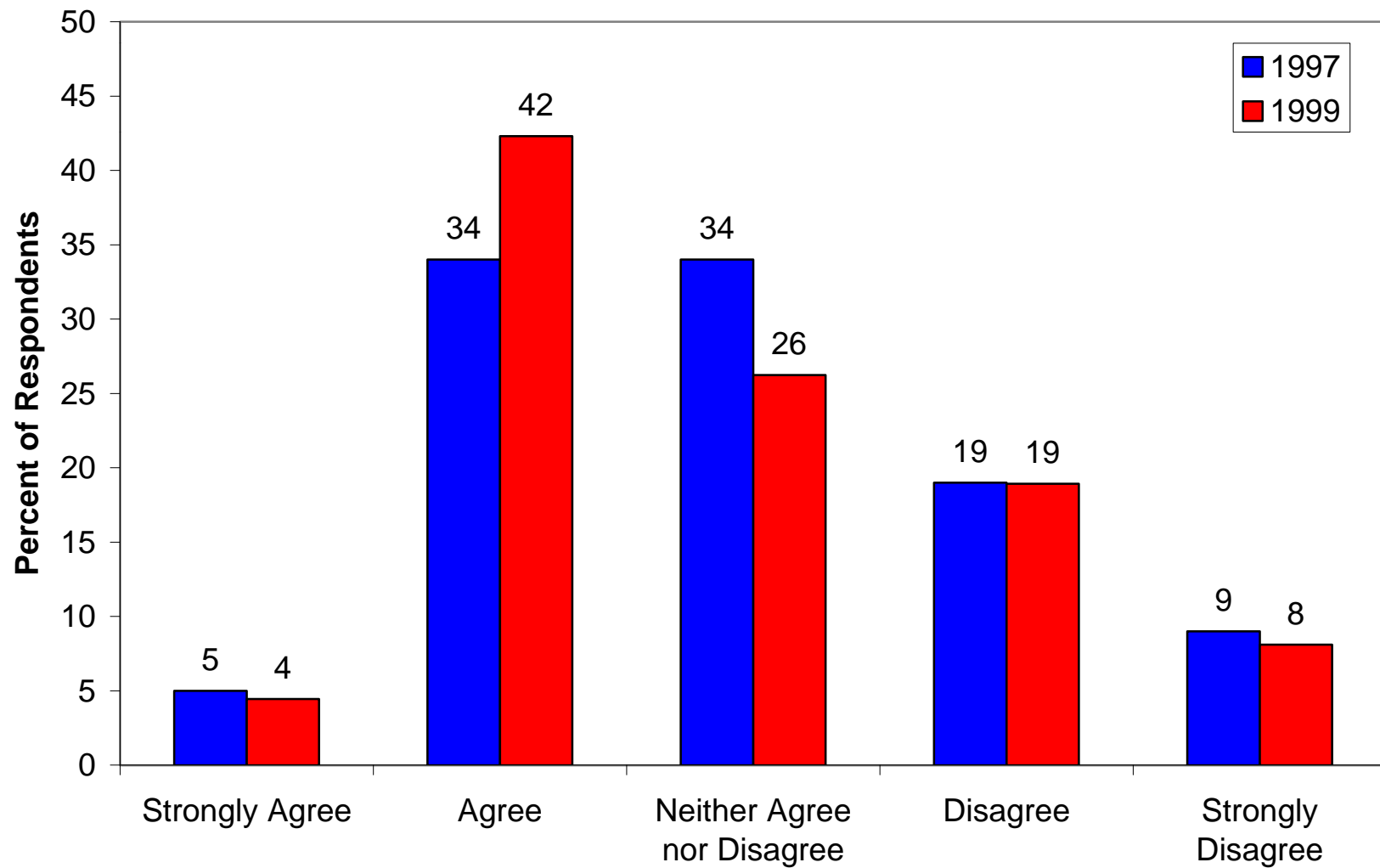
Communication



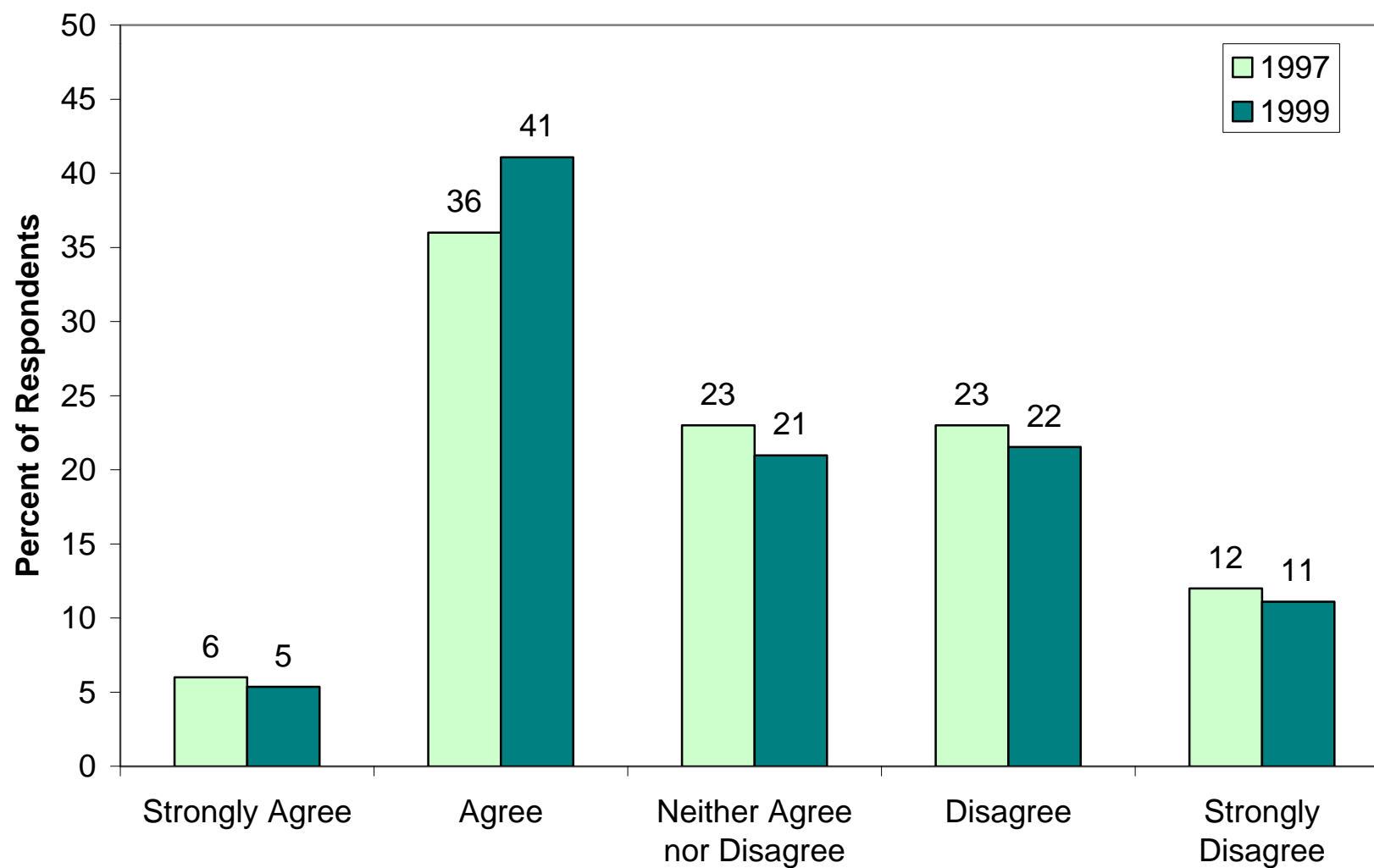
Leadership and Quality



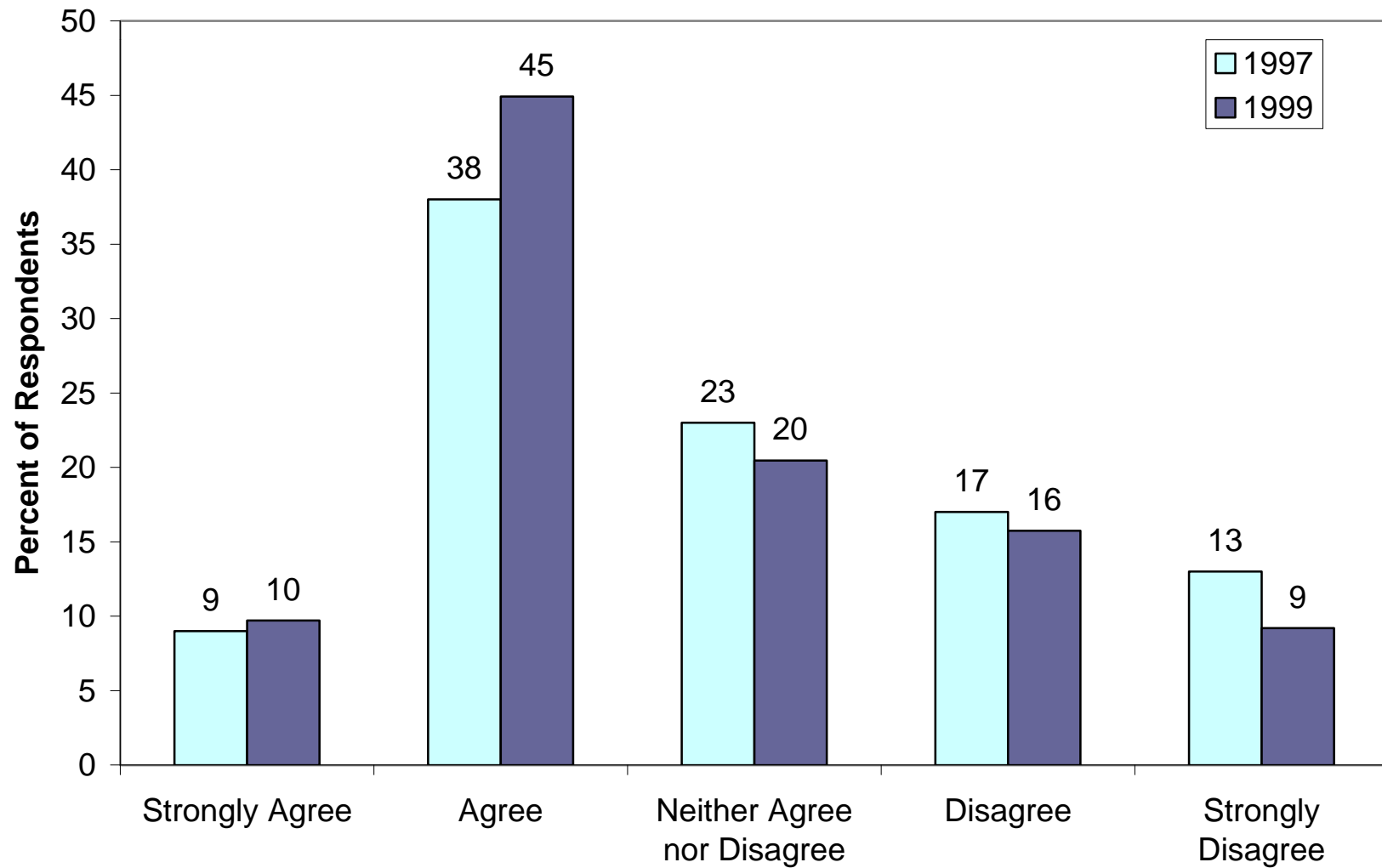
Performance Measures



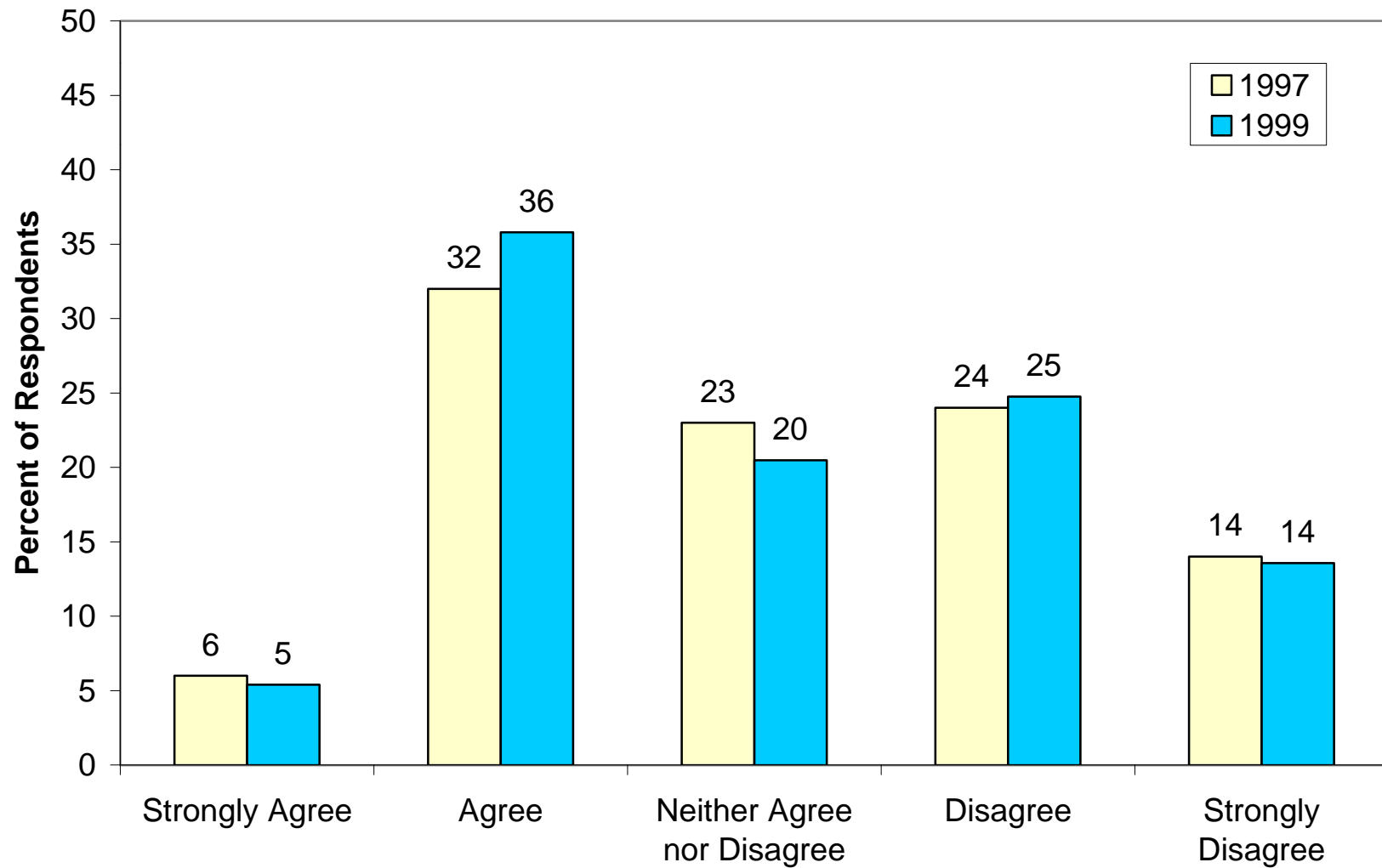
Teamwork



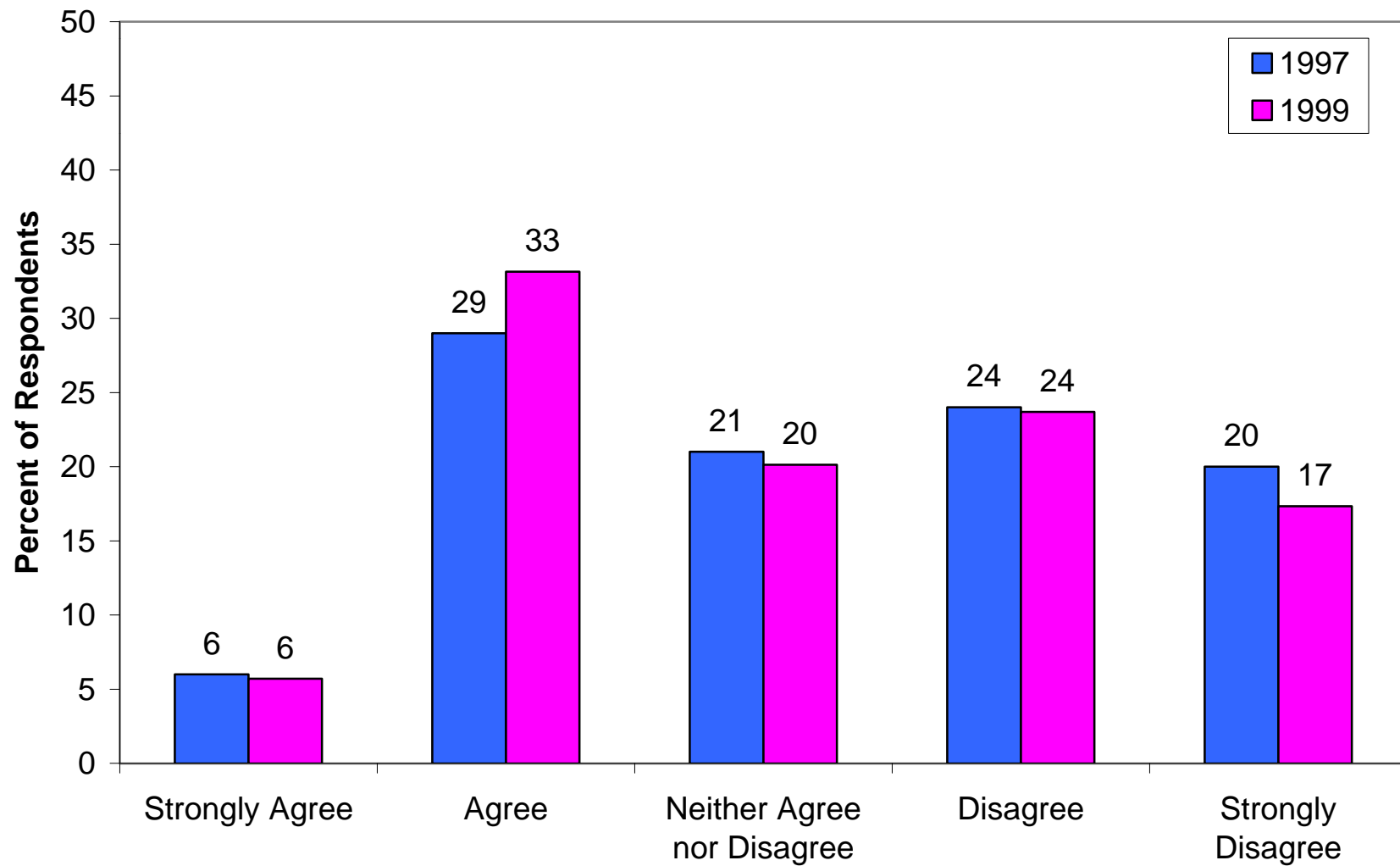
Work and Family/Personal Life



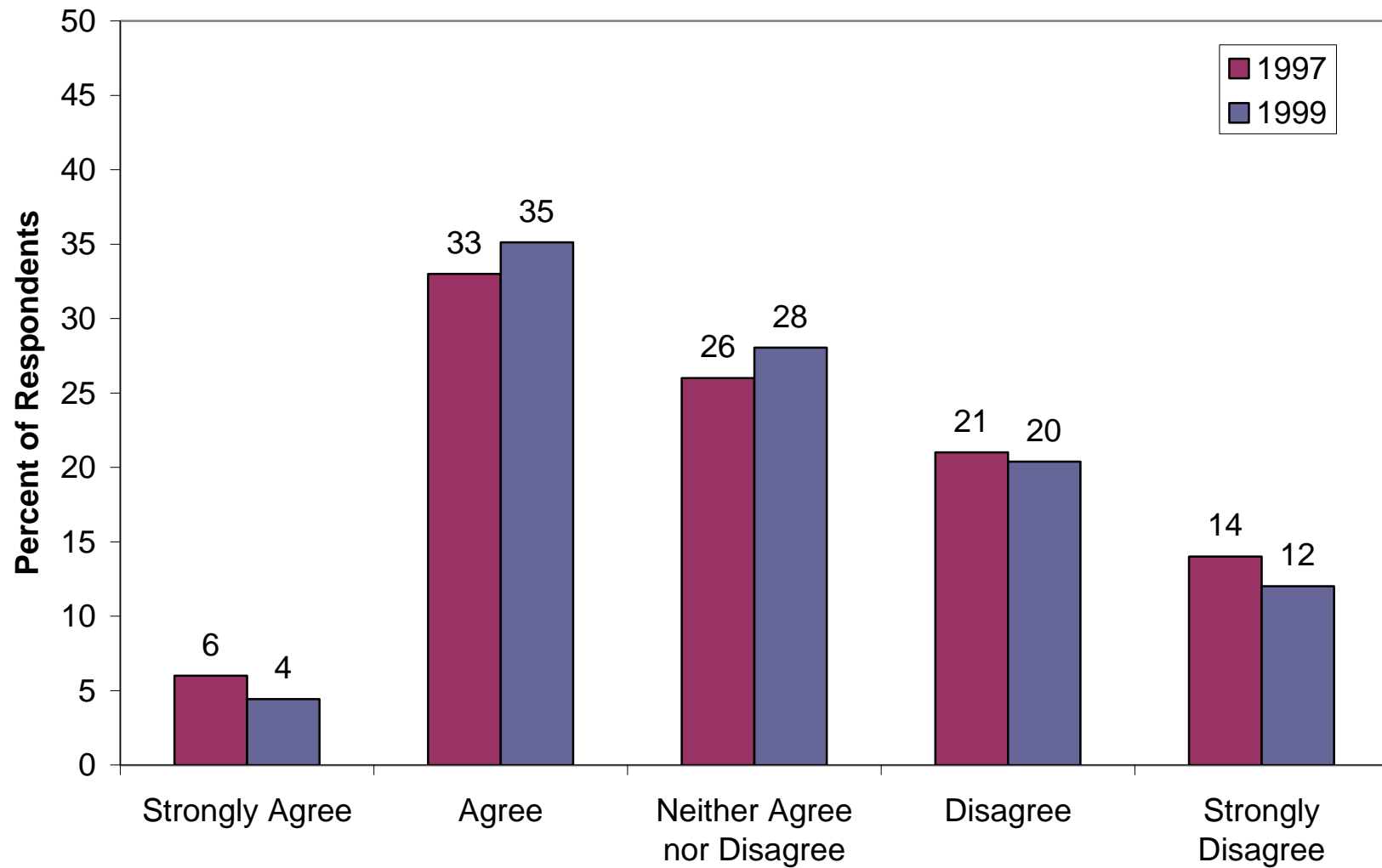
Employee Involvement



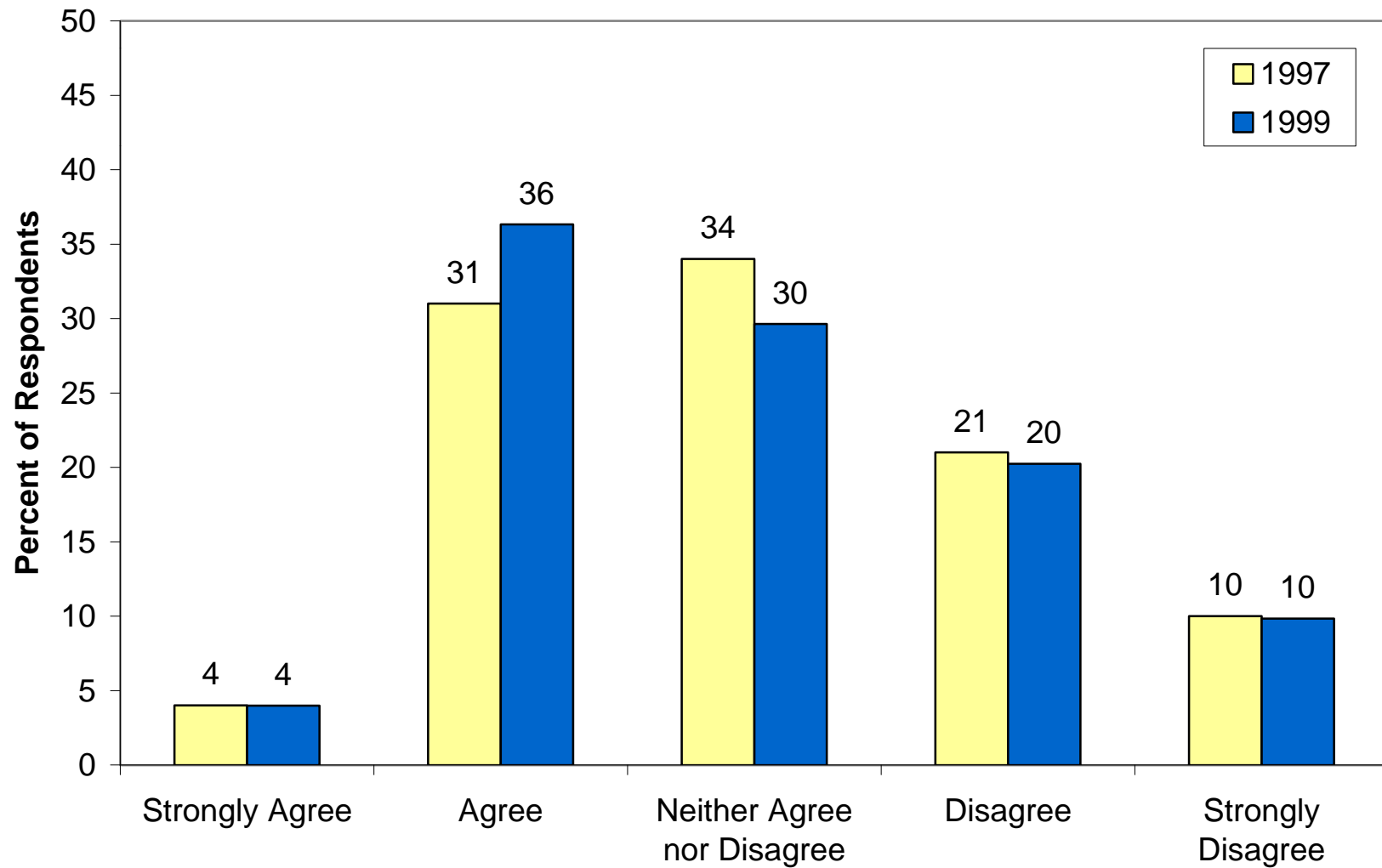
Fairness and Treatment of Others



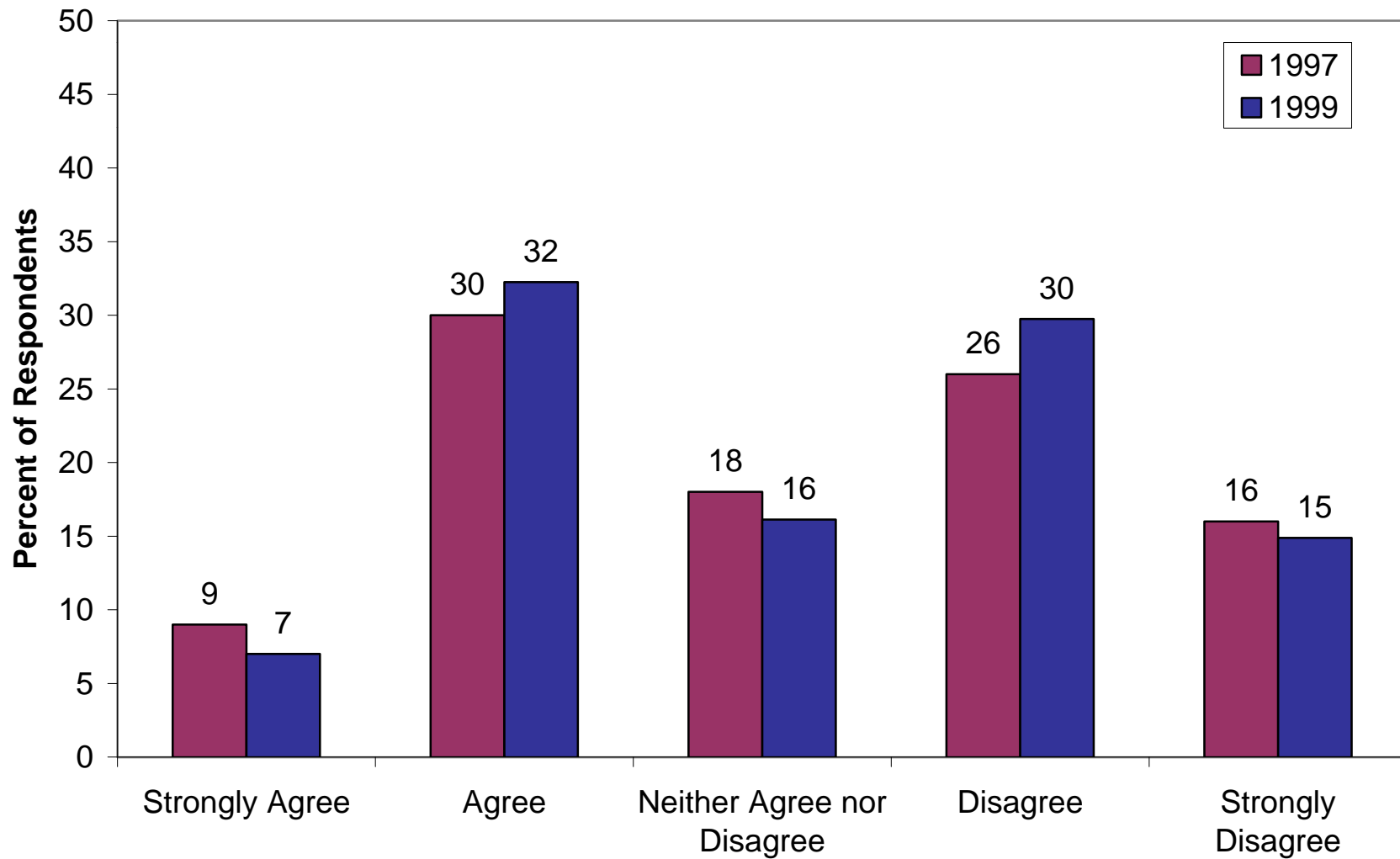
Job Security/Commitment to Workforce



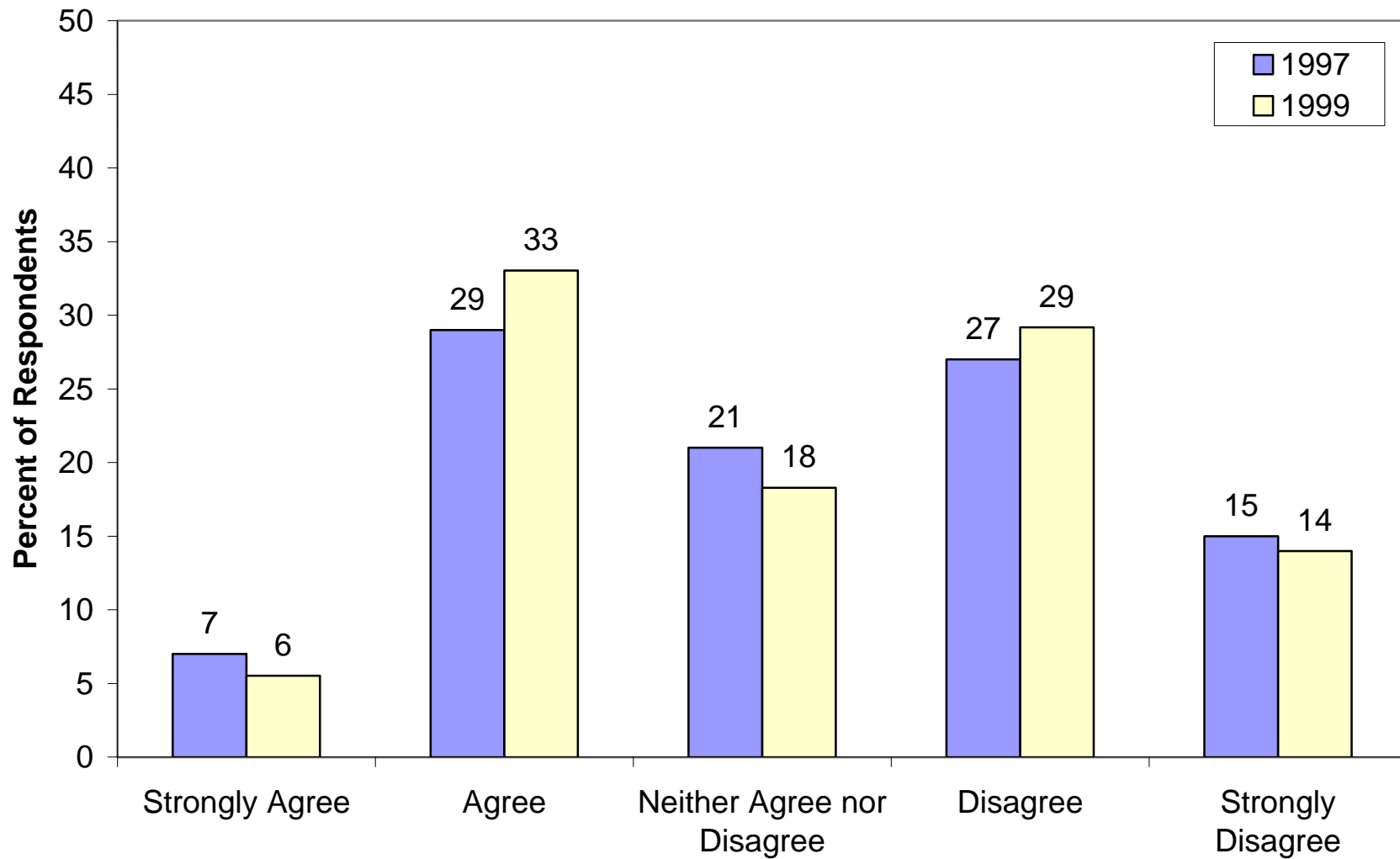
Strategic Planning



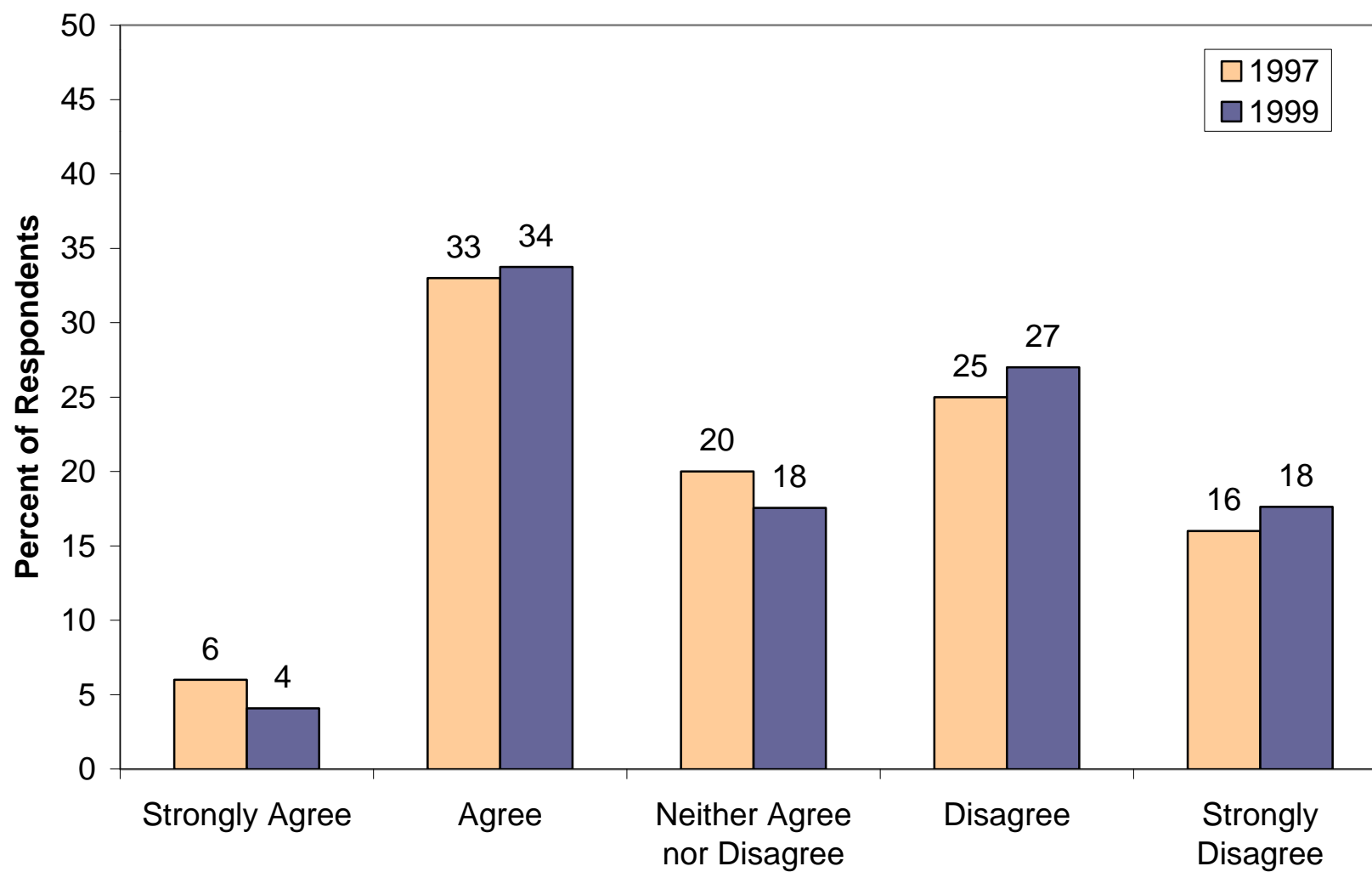
Rewards/Recognition



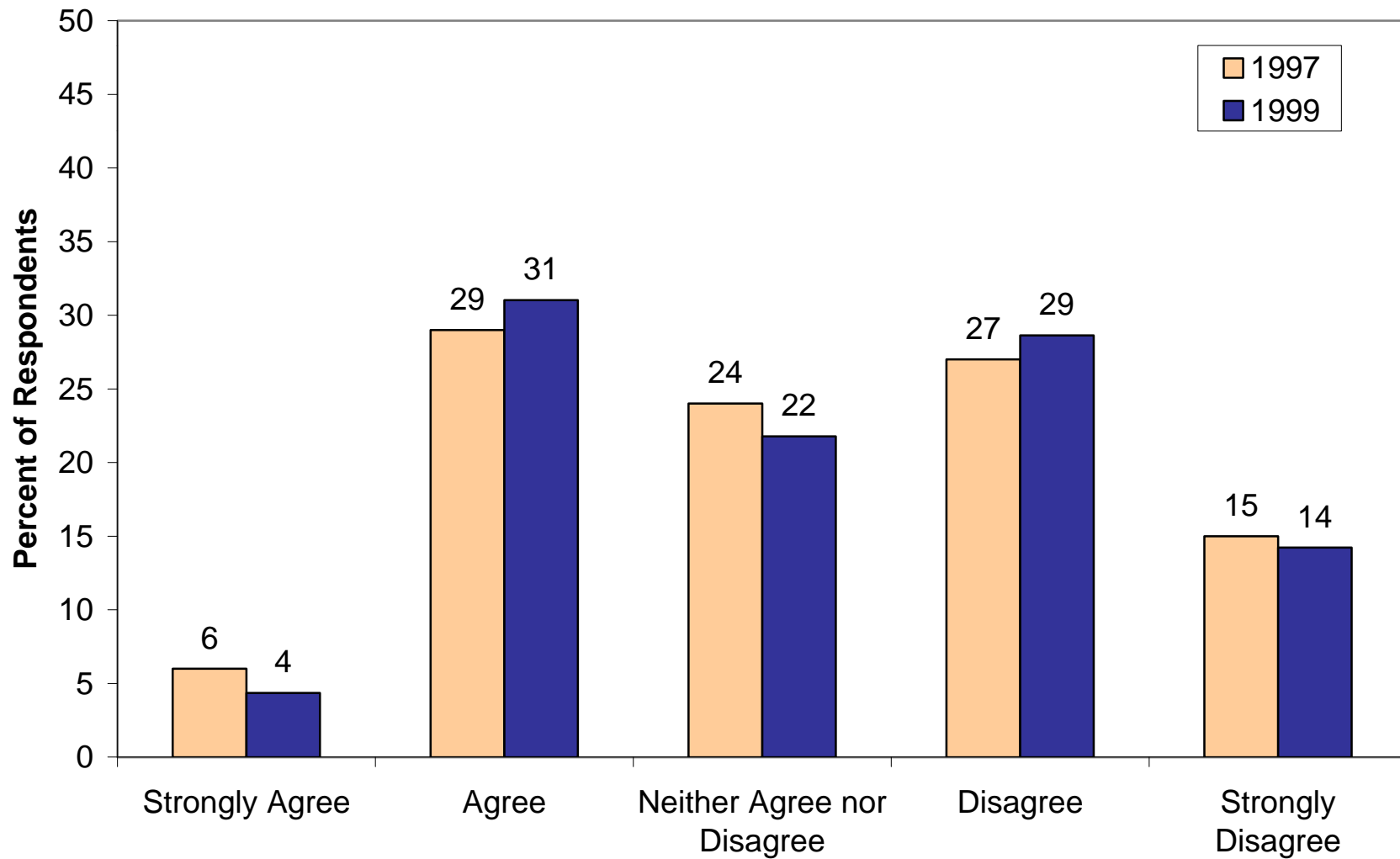
Training/Career Development



Use of Resources



Innovation



Quadrant Analysis

Quadrant analysis is useful for determining which employee satisfaction dimensions need improvement in order to raise an organization's overall level of job satisfaction. The analysis involves determining the importance of each employee satisfaction dimension to overall job satisfaction and an organization's current performance in each dimension. *Generally, dimensions with high importance to job satisfaction but relatively low performance are those which deserve immediate attention.*

Each of the dimensions represented in the quadrant analysis graph are plotted on the basis of:

- 1) **Importance:** a dimension's correlation with overall job satisfaction, and
- 2) **Performance:** an organization's performance within an employee satisfaction dimension.

Dimension correlations with overall job satisfaction are used to determine the degree to which each dimension is related to overall job satisfaction. Zero indicates no correlation, and 1 indicates perfect correlation. *Dimensions with correlations closer to 1 are considered to have higher importance.*

Performance percents represent how well VBA is performing within a given dimension (for example, the percent of employees who indicated satisfaction with the level of teamwork within their organization). The percent represents responses of *agree (4)* or *strongly agree (5)* to each five-point scale dimension question. *The closer the percent is to 100, the better VBA is performing.*

The quadrant analysis graph is divided into four quadrants (sections) based on the plotted location of a dimension:

Quadrant I: Critical Improvement Areas (high importance, low performance):

Dimensions in which VBA is not performing as well as it could be, but which have a considerable impact on overall job satisfaction. These items deserve immediate attention.

Quadrant II: Maintain Relationship Building Variables (high importance, high performance):

Dimensions in which VBA is performing well and which are important to overall job satisfaction. Your office or program should maintain current practices and resources for these items so that employee satisfaction does not decline and negatively affect job satisfaction.

Quadrant III: Lower Return on High Performance (low importance, high performance):

Dimensions in which VBA is performing well but which, while important to overall job satisfaction, do not have as great an impact as other dimensions. Generally, no additional resources should be devoted to these areas.

Quadrant IV: Lower Return on Investment (low importance, low performance):

Dimensions in which VBA is not performing as well as it could, but which are also not considered to have a critical impact on overall job satisfaction. There is a lower return on investment in these items, but, given resources, improvement could be sought.

The horizontal line in the plot represents importance and is placed at .50, which indicates relatively high correlation and, thus, relatively high importance. The vertical line represents performance and is placed at 50 percent. The initial placement of the lines to form quadrants of equal size is somewhat arbitrary and should be thought of only as a starting place. The lines can be moved up or down, left or right, to include more or fewer items in each quadrant, as specific offices or programs see appropriate.

The quadrant analysis chart and graph are based on approximately 4888 VBA employee respondents working in any office or division within VBA.

Explanation of Employee Survey Dimensions

Eighteen (18) employee satisfaction dimensions were examined by the organizational-wide 1999 "One VA" Employee Survey. A brief description of each dimension follows in the chart below. The letters next to each dimension name correspond with the plotted letters in the quadrant analysis graph.

Rewards (R)	High-performing employees are recognized through monetary and non-monetary rewards.
Training (T)	Employees receive adequate training to perform well in their jobs, provide high-quality service to customers, and enhance career advancement opportunities.
Innovation (I)	Employees are trained in new technologies. Creativity and innovation are encouraged and rewarded. Supervisors and employees are receptive to change.
Customer Orientation (Co)	An organization's knowledge of external customer requirements. Commitment to satisfying customer needs.
Leadership (L)	Management commitment and involvement in creating and sustaining an organizational vision and customer focus, as well as quality values.
Fairness (F)	People treat each other with respect. Career advancement occurs for qualified individuals regardless of race, gender, age, disability, etc.
Communication (C)	Managers effectively communicate goals and priorities of organization. Employees share knowledge with each other.
Employee Involvement (E)	Employees are held accountable for achieving positive results. Employees have a feeling of empowerment and ownership of work processes.
Use of Resources (U)	Employees have appropriate supplies to perform their jobs. Amount of work is reasonable, regulations do not interfere with completion of work, efforts are made to minimize organizational hierarchy.
Work Environment (We)	Physical work conditions allow employees to perform their jobs well. Programs minimize stress and encourage good health practices.
Work and Family (Wf)	Family-related and personal responsibilities are understood and supported by the organization through programs and policies.
Teamwork (Tw)	Teams are used to accomplish organizational goals. Spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists.
Job Security (J)	Strategies exist to protect job security. Adequate advanced notice and programs to help employees deal with downsizing. Employees receive training to pursue other careers.
Strategic Planning (P)	How well quality requirements are integrated into the organization's planning process.
Performance Measurement (Pm)	Organizational outcomes are used to assess organizational performance at regular intervals. Quality assurance systems focus on prevention of problems, rather than on correction of problems.
Diversity (D)	Differences (gender, race, national origin, etc.) among employees are respected and valued. Policies and programs promote diversity. Reports of sexual harassment are handled effectively.
Supervision (S)	Supervisors communicate and provide help and/or guidance to assist employees in completing tasks. Trust between supervisors and employees.
Barriers to Service Delivery (B)	No significant barriers (communication-related, diversity-related, etc.) exist that prevent employees from completing job tasks and producing high-quality products.

Quadrant Analysis for 1999 One-VA Employee Survey for VBA

